

THE FAIRFAX AREA AGENCY ON AGING PRESENTS CAREGIVER'S CORNER ONLINE AUGUST 2005

"Caregiver's Corner Online" is an electronic newsletter produced by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (AAA) with funding from the National Family Caregiver Support Program of the Older Americans Act. Our goal is to send you information to support you as a family caregiver for an older adult.

IN THIS EDITION:

1. Home Care For Your Loved One – A Necessity For Many
2. Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising
Minor Grandchildren – Kinship Care
3. Caregivers of Older Adults
4. Previous Editions of "Caregiver's Corner
Online" are Available

1. HOME CARE FOR YOUR LOVED ONE—A NECESSITY FOR MANY. Family caregivers sometimes reach a point where they need help caring for their loved one. It may be a few hours of respite care, some limited time while the older person is recuperating from an illness, or it may be on an extended basis while the caregiver is at work.

a. **Determine What Level of Care is Needed:** Some older persons may need help with personal care like bathing, dressing, help with toileting, and with meal preparation. Some may just need a person in the home for supervision and minimal personal care. There are various sources for finding help.

b. **Resources for Finding Reliable, Qualified, Caregivers:** Home care agencies are listed in the phone book and in the "Guide to Retirement Living". The guide can be accessed most quickly online at: www.guidetoretirementliving.com or call 1-800-394-9990 to request a copy. Also, the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (AAA) has copies. In addition, the AAA has a "Companion Registry," listing individuals who have been interviewed by the county and put on a registry, without recommendation. The individuals are self-employed. The caregiver becomes the employer of these individuals and makes all financial and scheduling arrangements.

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c. SeniorNavigator is a statewide online service that lists home care providers and information articles to assist caregivers. Visit the Web site at www.seniornavigator.org and look for "Quick search," then type in "home care" and your zip code.

d. Make a Checklist of Required Services: Before calling for care, make a checklist of what services will be needed. The Virginia Department for the Aging suggests that caregivers ask whether the person or agency can provide the services needed, what their training or experience is, what their references are, and how payment will be made. Some agencies may provide Medicare or Medicaid-funded services, in addition to private pay hours.

e. The Hiring Process: Once you have selected a home care agency or individual, create a written agreement to ensure that you and the home care provider understand the terms of this business and service arrangement. An agreement should include the care to be given; days and hours of work; terms of wage payment and benefits; designation of a backup worker; advanced notice of termination of the service; and who to contact in an emergency. When both parties take the time in the beginning to sit down, explore, and record their expectations, many simple misunderstandings can be avoided. During the hiring process, consumers should inquire about and verify a home care provider's training, credentials, and prior experience. Consumers should ask for references and call them with forthright questions. A preliminary face-to-face interview with the provider is a must!

f. Who to Call if There Is a Problem: The Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman program investigates and resolves complaints about long-term care, including home care, if the caregiver and the agency are unable to resolve their differences. The Ombudsman intake number is 703-324-5861.

g. Additional Resources: If you have questions about aging services in Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church, please call the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging at 703-324-7948; or visit the Web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/service/aaa/inhomecare.htm for other useful information, including "Finding Your Way Through the Home Care Maze."

Sources: Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program and "Home Care--Resource Guide" published by the Virginia Department for the Aging.

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2. GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER RELATIVES RAISING MINOR

GRANDCHILDREN – KINSHIP CARE. If you are a grandparent or other relative who is raising a child not your own, you know the meaning of LOVE and you know the meaning of STRESS. There are some activities coming up that you may want to be aware of.

Fairfax County Department of Family Services and Fairfax County Public Schools have been collaborating on two support groups to help such families. After a summer break, the support groups will resume the first week of October. Look in the September edition of "Caregiver's Corner Online" for more specifics about the time and place.

"Generations United (GU)" will be hosting its Biennial International Conference in Washington, D.C. in September. Generations United lists itself as the "only national membership organization advocating for the mutual well being of children, youth, and older adults." It has been a leader in promoting awareness of issues related to kinship care. The conference will be held at the Washington Marriott from September 13-17, 2005. Of particular interest to grandparents is the pre-conference intensive, "Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children: Supportive Programs and Public Policies," on September 13. Also, the "GrandRally" on Capitol Hill will be held Wednesday, September 14, from 1-2 p.m. There is no charge for the GrandRally. If you are interested in attending the conference or rally, visit the Web site at www.gu.org or call 202-289-3979.

3. CAREGIVERS OF OLDER ADULTS. If you are a caregiver of an older adult, watch for the September edition of "Caregiver's Corner Online" for a listing of seminars to be presented in the Fall by the Fairfax Caregiver Seminar Consortium. Final plans are being made for the series now.

4. PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF "CAREGIVER'S CORNER ONLINE" NEWSLETTER ARE NOW AVAILABLE. Current and past editions of the "Caregiver's Corner Online" newsletter are available online at

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/service/aaa/caregivers_corner_nl.htm.

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**Please note that these items are included for informational purposes only and do not imply endorsement by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging or Fairfax County Government.

For further information, please contact an Aging Information Specialist at the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (telephone: 703-324-7948; TTY 703-449-1186 or e-mail: fairfax_aaa@fairfaxcounty.gov). Visit our website at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/service/aaa.
